

**Recap of November 17, 2004, Meeting
Government Access and Information Committee
12:00pm Room 206 County/City Building**

Attendees: *Rod Armstrong, James Lamphere, Gwen Thorpe, Shannon Ideus, Trish Owen, Brian Pillard, Tan Pham, Doug Thomas, Don Herz and Terry Lowe.*

Approval of Minutes,

August, September and October minutes were approved.

Statistics

We had 8.6 million hits on the NT server in October, which is the second highest total we've ever had in a month. We were a little bit higher in August. I think that was related to the Register of Deed's downloading that was occurring that we discussed previously, as well as pretty significant activity within the Assessor pages. On the mainframe we had 1,350,000 hits, images hits were just under 1,000,000 The criminal justice pages had an all time high of 255,000 which included 24,000 accident reports downloaded and 3,200 criminal history checks. The contractors page hits were down a little bit from last month, but that may have been affected by prior testing. We had 371,000 total user sessions, which as it was in the case of NT hits, is the second highest of all time.

ePayments

October's payments were just a little under \$95,000 which reflects a non-active tax month because we are in between due dates and that is clearly the cycle that seems to impact us the most on total payments. We had almost 2,000 payments collected. 35 animals license renewals, 24 property tax payments, over 400 parking tickets, over 500 criminal history checks and 650 event parking payments. Total transactions of e-payments for the month were 1,914. That brings our total to 33,000 payments since we started taking payments through the internet for a little over 3.2 million dollars. So, this is a significant amount over this time frame. We are over 1.6 million in the current calendar year of the total 3.2 million that we have collected over the last 22 months. We continue to see growth in that area.

Commercial water/sewer accounts are now eligible to be paid via the web. Previously you could only pay these if the address had less than 9 meters. Wells Fargo has partnered up with a group called E-POS for tax payment processing. Currently we are still waiting for the final go ahead from the attorneys, but it has all been tested and is ready to go. They have in there four credit cards and electronic checks, it costs three dollars for electronic checks. Three dollars for a check seems high to us but that is the rate they quoted. It certainly exceeds what most clearing houses charge for eChecks. . The E-POS only does taxes right now they charge a flat fee of 2 ½%.

Some of the title companies would be interested in having an alternative besides credit cards to pay off groups of outstanding water bills. The eChecks might be a good

alternative. Paypal has a similar type of pay structure, you set up an account and put money in it and you draw down against it. It is similar to Building and Safety with the permits. There are a variety of companies that do that, that allow for you to fill the account and then you draw against it to make electronic payments. That may be something that could be requested from Margaret in Public Works about to see if they would be willing to do something like that. Jim's title company closes 300-400 deals a month and they have water bills on every one of them. Rod said that they are close to implementing electronic checks at the state too. They are waiting for the attorneys at the Treasurer's office. For clarification, Wells Fargo came to us and said that the existing set up \$30/payment, wasn't working. We did not approach them and say we want to go to a percentage. Wells Fargo approached us and didn't like the actuarial and the big payments. So they are really the ones that have pushed more that we modify the County's arrangement. They basically said that if we had the flat fee like we had before that we would have to flip up to about \$92, but if you think about it 2 ½ % of what makes \$90 dollars. The \$3 check may also be attractive, but then we inherit all the check issues with bouncing and everything else. It is a convenience for the customer, but it is just like a check that came across the counter. So, the MasterCard / Visa thing was really to our advantage, the money was in the bank the next day and it is between you and the bank if that bounces, once it was authorized it was our money. So, we will just see how it goes. If we want we can add the voice recognition stuff later as E-Pos does bring that technology to the table. I know a state contract for ACH that we're using for electronic checks is 4 cents. The number is 25 cents around to the other municipalities because that is the cost of the Treasurer's Office, it may be a little bit of a markup but they view it as so much nicer than having to process and chase down bounced checks that way. Maybe the time is right to talk to Margaret because she is the one that pushed for the commercial accounts as well, they approached us about getting that because they were hearing from their customers. They have even asked us for some bill presentation software so people can get their bills electronically instead of through the mail. Which is a good idea, we're going to look into that. You subscribe to that and it is just right there you look it up online anytime that you want it and when you sign up you basically you notify them when the bill is there. We could do something like the Register of Deeds did where they have record keeping on who is looking, we only have a limited amount of access.

Register of Deeds, Secured Sign On

You are probably aware that the switch was flipped on November 15, now you have to have an Interline secured login and you have to have been registered with the Register of Deeds's prior to look at the images of supporting documents. You can still look at all the data, bounce around as much as you want. There is a log going on not saying which pages of the images, but at least that instrument when you click on the instrument number to view it there is a log that goes in there that says this user ID, this is date and time stamped. So, hopefully we are a little bit ahead of the curve from the Legislative standpoint. They started this a couple of weeks ago, it's actually a great system. It works very well. I think you are going to see a pretty sizeable plummet in image access. That is okay because now we are servicing targeted groups and if citizens still want it, they can. Jim stated that it does work good and serves their needs just fine, although when you sign

in it takes you to the next document in line, you have to go back out and then go in. If I want to look at a deed and it asks me for my login and I log myself in and it doesn't take me to that document, the instrument that I can pull up is the next instrument. If you are consistently active in it, it won't log you out, however if it is inactive for a period of time it automatically logs you out.

County Attorney Court Scheduling Application

This has been completed and is in production. It provides court schedule information. It is a bit of a mini criminal history, as it has criminal history information related to County charges and dispositions.

Applicant Tracking

The application is up and running but the web component will probably not go in until after the first of the year. We are currently making sure that we have our i's dotted and t's crossed for not precluding any groups from the opportunity to apply for jobs. We are working with someone at the State to make sure that visually impaired individuals will not face any hardships. We are going to use a software package (JAWS) to make this determination.

Appointments

In January the following people have terms that end, James Lamphere, (willing to serve again), Jim Langtry who is not here, Shannon Ideus (who thought it might be more appropriate for someone else within Public Works), and Trish Owen (who is willing to serve again). We'll forewarn James and Trish and discuss the other two next month.

Next Meeting

December 15, 2004